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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 ABUJA 003143

SIPDIS

AID ADM

USAID/W FOR AFR/WA, MIKE KARBELING
ABUJA FOR ADMIN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [AMGT](#) [APER](#) [ECON](#) [PREL](#)

SUBJECT: WORLD AIDS DAY

REF: RE: WORLD AIDS DAY

11. SUMMARY: ON SATURDAY DECEMBER 1, THE NATIONAL ACTION COMMITTEE FOR AIDS (NACA) ORGANIZED A DAYLONG CALENDAR OF EVENTS TO COMMEMORATE WORLD AIDS DAY IN ABUJA THAT INCLUDED A PLENARY SESSION FOR MAJOR GOVERNMENT AND NON-GOVERNMENT ACTORS, A CITY TOUR AND RALLY, AND A SOCCER COMPETITION. THE PLENARY SESSION INCLUDED BRIEFINGS BY MINISTRY AND DONOR REPRESENTATIVES OUTLINING THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NATIONAL HIV/AIDS EFFORT, AND AN EVENT HONORING PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). THE CONCLUSIONS THAT CAN BE DRAWN FROM ATTENDANCE AT THIS SESSION ARE AS FOLLOWS: 1) NACA IS NOW FIRMLY IN CHARGE OF THE NATIONAL PROGRAM AND THE APPROACH IS AVOWEDLY MULTI-SECTORAL. FOR INSTANCE, THE MINISTERS OF WOMEN AFFAIRS AND LABOR PERSONALLY REPORTED ON THEIR ACTIVITIES WHILE OTHER MINISTERS WERE REPRESENTED BY OTHER HIGH LEVEL FUNCTIONARIES. 2) THE PROMINENCE OF PLWHAS IN THE PROGRAM SIGNIFIES INCREASED NACA/GFRN ACCEPTANCE OF THEIR CRITICAL ROLE IN DISEASE MITIGATION. IN THE FUTURE PLWHAS ARE CERTAIN TO FIGURE CENTRALLY IN NATIONAL EFFORTS TO ALLEVIATE STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION. 3) SEVERAL PLWHAS MADE FRANK COMMENTS ABOUT GOVERNMENTAL HIV/AIDS INTERVENTIONS AND THE EXISTENCE OF GOVERNMENTAL DISCRIMINATION AGAINST PLWHAS. THIS DEMONSTRATED A FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION THAT DID NOT EXIST PRIOR TO THE DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION. THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE ALSO CITED USAID AS THE MAJOR PARTNER SUPPORTING ITS CRITICAL ACTIVITIES SEVERAL TIMES DURING HIS PRESENTATION. THE ENTIRE DAY EVENTS WERE WELL COVERED BY THE MEDIA BUT THE POOR QUALITY OF THAT COVERAGE SUGGESTS A CRITICAL NEED FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.

22. NACA LEADERSHIP: NACA ORGANIZATION OF THIS ACTIVITY AND THE DEGREE OF REPRESENTATION FROM ALL SECTORS SUGGEST THAT THE ORGANIZATION HAS FINALLY COME OF AGE AND IS IN CHARGE OF THE NATION HIV/AIDS RESPONSE. CDC AND USAID HAVE BEEN MAJOR SUPPORTERS OF NACA SINCE THE ORGANIZATION CREATION AND OF THE MULTI-SECTOR APPROACH. IN ADDITION, THE PRESENCE OF GENERALLY HIGH LEVEL MINISTRY REPRESENTATIVES AND THEIR REPORTS ON THE ACTIVITIES BEING IMPLEMENTED IN EACH OF THE MINISTRIES SUGGESTS THAT THE MINISTRIES ARE BEING HELD PUBLICLY ACCOUNTABLE FOR DOING HIV/AIDS ACTIVITIES. HOWEVER, THE TWO PROGRAMS THAT APPEAR TO HAVE SUBSTANCE ARE ALSO THE ONLY ONES RECEIVING ASSISTANCE FROM OUTSIDE DONORS; THE MINISTRY OF LABOR AND PRODUCTIVITY RECEIVES HELP FROM THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION AND THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE RECEIVES USAID FUNDING. THE LACK OF REAL SUBSTANCE OF MOST OF THE PROGRAMS SUGGESTS THAT CERTAIN KEY MINISTRIES HAVE A CRITICAL NEED FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND CAPACITY BUILDING IN HIV/AIDS PROGRAMMING.

33. PLWHAS: AN EVENT SPOTLIGHTING PLWHAS WAS A MAJOR COMPONENT OF THE PLENARY SESSION AND INCLUDED THE PRESENTATION OF PLWHAS TO THE GUESTS OF HONOR AND SPEECHES BY MUHAMMAD FAROUK, NATIONAL COORDINATOR OF THE USAID-SUPPORTED NATIONAL AIDS ALLIANCE, AND SENATOR KHAIRAT GWADABE, WHO WAS REPRESENTING THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE. MR. FAROUK CONGRATULATED THE GFRN ON ITS LEADERSHIP ROLE IN THE PLANNED PROVISION OF ANTIVIRALS WHILE HE ALSO MADE A PLEA FOR THE DRUG PROVISION PROGRAM TO BE EXCEPTIONALLY WELL ORGANIZED AND MANAGED. ACCORDING TO HIM, AN ILL-MANAGED ANTIVIRAL PROGRAM RUNS THE RISK OF DEVASTATING RATHER THAN IMPROVING THE HEALTH OF PLWHAS. SENATOR GWADABE MADE A GRACIOUS SPEECH IN WHICH SHE COMMENDED THE PLWHAS PRESENT FOR THEIR COURAGE IN OING PUBLIC ITH THE DISEASE AND FOR THEIR SERVICE TO THE NATION IN DOING SO. ONE PLWHA, A SERVING LIEUTENANT IN THE NIGERIAN NAVY, CRITICIZED THE ARMED FORCES FOR THEIR DISCRIMINATION

AGAINST PLWHAS INCLUDING THE DENIAL OF THEIR RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES. HE CITED, FOR INSTANCE, THE EXISTENCE OF SPECIAL ISOLATED HOSPITAL WARDS FOR PLWHAS, THE LACK OF MEDICINES TO TREAT THE OPPORTUNISTIC INFECTIONS OF ARMED FORCES MEMBERS, AND THE REFUSAL TO SEND PLWHAS ON OVERSEAS ASSIGNMENTS OR FOR OVERSEAS TRAINING. THE LIEUTENANT ALSO CRITICIZED THE MINISTERS WHO WERE NOT PRESENT AT THE SESSION BUT WHO INSTEAD WERE BLY REPRESENTED Y OTHERS. HE SAID THE MINISTERS WOULD BE THERE PERSONALLY IF VOTES WERE INVOLVED AND THUS URGED ALL PLWHAS TO VOTE.

14. THE MEDIA: AN OPEN PRESS SESSION NEAR THE END OF THE MEETING UNDERLINED THE NEED TO REINFORCE ONGOING EFFORTS TO EDUCATE THE PRINT AND BROADCAST MEDIA ON ISSUES INVOLVING HIV/AIDS. ONE QUESTION DIRECTED TO THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE, FOR INSTANCE, ASKED WHEN LEGISLATION WOULD BE PASSED TO PROHIBIT HIV+ WOMEN FROM HAVING CHILDREN AND THUS FROM PASSING ON THE VIRUS. THIS QUESTION WAS PROBABLY STIMULATED BY THE STATISTICS CONCERNING MOTHER TO CHILD TRANSMISSION (I.E. ONE-THIRD OF AFRICAN BABIES BORN TO HIV INFECTED MOTHERS WILL BE UNINTENTIONALLY INFECTED VIA CHILD BIRTH AND BREASTFEEDING) GIVEN DURING PRELIMINARY SPEECHES AND THE PRESENCE AMONG THE PLWHAS OF SEVERAL WOMEN WITH YOUNG CHILDREN AND/OR PREGNANT. THIS QUESTION AND SEVERAL OTHERS SHOWING LACK OF UNDERSTANDING ESPECIALLY OF THE HUMAN AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS OF PLWHAS DREW IMMEDIATE, NEGATIVE REACTIONS FROM THE CROWD. SEVERAL PROPOSALS TO INCREASE THE MEDIA CAPACITY TO REPORT ON HIV/AIDS ISSUES ARE CURRENTLY UNDER REVIEW.

15. THOMAS HOBGOOD, USAID DIRECTOR, WHO DELIVERED A SHORT SPEECH OUTLINING US SUPPORT TO THE FIGHT AGAINST HIV/AIDS BOTH INTERNATIONALLY AND IN NIGERIA, REPRESENTED THE USG. THE BODY OF HIS SPEECH IS AS FOLLOWS:

1R. CHAIRMAN, REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SENATE PRESIDENT, HONORABLE MINISTERS AND THEIR REPRESENTATIVES, MEMBERS OF THE HIGH TABLE, NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS, YOUNG PEOPLE OF NIGERIA, PEOPLE LIVING WITH AIDS HERE PRESENT, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

I AM PLEASED TO BE HERE AND TO GIVE A GOODWILL MESSAGE ON BEHALF OF THE US GOVERNMENT ON THIS WORLD AIDS DAY. THE US GOVERNMENT ACKNOWLEDGES THE SERIOUSNESS OF HIV/AIDS FOR MILLIONS OF PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD. LAST YEAR MORE PEOPLE CONTRACTED HIV AND MORE DIED OF AIDS THAN IN ANY OTHER YEAR. EIGHTY PERCENT OF ALL GLOBAL AIDS DEATHS AND 70 PERCENT OF ALL NEW HIV INFECTIONS ARE IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA. AN ESTIMATED 34 MILLION AFRICANS ARE CURRENTLY INFECTED WITH THE VIRUS AND OVER 3 MILLION OF THAT TOTAL ARE NIGERIANS. WE ARE PARTICULARLY GRATIFIED TO SEE SO MANY PEOPLE HERE TODAY UNDER THE GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP OF PRESIDENT OBASANJO AND NGOS ALL INDICATING THEIR SUPPORT TO COMBAT THE AIDS EPIDEMIC IN NIGERIA. THE EPIDEMIC HAS EVOLVED FROM A HEALTH ISSUE TO ONE THAT IMPACTS ON ALL SECTORS, THEREBY NECESSITATING A COLLECTIVE AND URGENT RESPONSE. IN MANY COUNTRIES IT IS CONSIDERED A MATTER OF NATIONAL SECURITY.

US GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE INTERNATIONALLY:

(A). THE UNITED STATES IS THE LARGEST BILATERAL DONOR OF HIV/AIDS ASSISTANCE, CURRENTLY PROVIDING NEARLY 40 PERCENT OF ALL INTERNATIONAL HIV/AIDS FUNDING. SINCE 1986, THROUGH THE U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ALONE, THE U.S. GOVERNMENT HAS DEDICATED OVER \$1.6 BILLION FOR THE PREVENTION AND MITIGATION OF THE HIV/AIDS EPIDEMIC IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD.

(B). THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION HAS CONTINUED THIS LEADERSHIP. THIS YEAR, USAID HIV/AIDS BUDGET WILL INCREASE OVER LAST YEAR'S, AND PRESIDENT BUSH ANNOUNCED THAT THE UNITED STATES WOULD BE THE FIRST DONOR TO THE NEW GLOBAL FUND TO FIGHT AIDS, TUBERCULOSIS, AND MALARIA, WITH AN INITIAL PLEDGE OF \$200 MILLION.

US GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE IN NIGERIA

(A). THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT IS ONE OF THE LARGEST BILATERAL DONORS OF HIV/AIDS ASSISTANCE IN NIGERIA. THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL PROGRAM PROVIDES TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND MATERIAL SUPPORT AMOUNTING TO APPROXIMATELY \$1.5 MILLION ANNUALLY. USAID FUNDING FOR HIV/AIDS PROGRAMS HAS INCREASED FROM \$2.6 MILLION IN 1999 TO \$12.3 MILLION IN 2001, AND IS EXPECTED TO INCREASE IN 2003. BOTH US GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS WORK TO PROMOTE THE OBJECTIVES OF THE HIV/AIDS EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN (HEAP) AND WORK CLOSELY WITH THE NATIONAL ACTION COMMITTEE ON AIDS (NACA).

THE MAJOR ACTIVITIES SUPPORTED UNDER THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL (CDC) PROGRAM ARE:

(A). SUPPORT TO THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT TO CONDUCT HIV/SYPHILIS SEROPREVALENCE SURVEYS. SEROPREVALENCE SURVEYS ARE NECESSARY TO ESTIMATE THE MAGNITUDE OF THE HIV/AIDS PROBLEM IN NIGERIA AND ALLOW THE GOVERNMENT TO DEVELOP APPROPRIATE STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THE EPIDEMIC. THE FEDERAL MINISTER OF HEALTH ANNOUNCED THE RESULTS OF THE LATEST 2001 CDC SUPPORTED SURVEY ON THURSDAY.

(B). BUILDING THE CAPACITY OF SELECT LABORATORIES TO PROVIDE QUALITY HIV TEST RESULTS. FOR INSTANCE, THE CDC RECENTLY CONDUCTED A NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND PROVIDED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO THE ABUJA REFERENCE LABORATORY.

(C). ESTABLISH VOLUNTARY AND CONFIDENTIAL COUNSELING PROGRAMS. SUCH PROGRAMS WILL SERVE AS CRITICAL ENTRY POINTS TO THE NATIONAL PROGRAM FOR PREVENTION OF MOTHER TO CHILD TRANSMISSION, CARE AND SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH AND THOSE AFFECTED BY HIV/AIDS, MANAGEMENT OF SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS, AND IMPROVED BLOOD DONOR SERVICES.

THE MAJOR FOCUSES OF THE USAID PROGRAM ARE:

A). DEVELOPMENT OF A POSITIVE POLICY ENVIRONMENT IN SUPPORT OF HIGH QUALITY HIV/AIDS SERVICES. THE POLICY PROJECT WORKS CLOSELY WITH NACA, THE FEDERAL MINISTRY OF HEALTH AIDS CONTROL PROGRAM, THE ARMED FORCES, JOURNALISTS, RELIGIOUS LEADERS, AND HUMAN RIGHTS LEADERS AMONG OTHERS TO CREATE WIDESPREAD GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY SUPPORT FOR HIV/AIDS INTERVENTIONS.

B). PREVENTION: NATIONWIDE, USAID CURRENTLY FUNDS A SOCIAL MARKETING PROJECT WITH POPULATION SERVICES INTERNATIONAL AND THE SOCIETY FOR FAMILY HEALTH, A LOCAL NGO, TO PROMOTE RISK REDUCTION BEHAVIOR AND USE OF PROVEN PREVENTIVE PRACTICES. THESE EFFORTS ARE COMPLIMENTED BY FAMILY HEALTH INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT OF 56 COMMUNITY-BASED PROJECTS THAT TARGET MULTIPLE POPULATIONS IN 12 STATES WITHIN THE 6 GEOPOLITICAL ZONES OF THE COUNTRY. JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY ALSO SUPPORTS THE ONLY PHONE HOTLINE FOR PEOPLE SEEKING CONFIDENTIAL, ANONYMOUS INFORMATION ABOUT THE

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DISEASE.

C). CARE AND SUPPORT OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH AND AFFECTED BY HIV/AIDS: FAMILY HEALTH INTERNATIONAL, CEDPA, AND AFRICARE PROVIDE CARE AND SUPPORT SERVICES FOR HIV POSITIVE PERSONS AND THEIR FAMILIES AND ASSISTANCE TO ORPHANS AND OTHER VULNERABLE CHILDREN AFFECTED BY HIV/AIDS.

IN ADDITION TO THE EXCELLENT EFFORTS THE GOVERNMENT OF NIGERIA IS MAKING TO FIGHT THIS TERRIBLE DISEASE, I WISH TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE VALIANT EFFORT OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS:

- (A) THE NIGERIAN AIDS ALLIANCE
- (B) SOCIETY FOR WOMEN AGAINST AIDS IN NIGERIA
(SWAAN)
- (C) MUSLIMS SISTERS ORGANIZATION
- (D) CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIA
- (E) NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIAN STUDENTS

MR. CHAIRMAN, HONORABLE MINISTERS, AND SENATE
PRESIDENT: YOU HAVE THE US GOVERNMENT COMPLETE
COMMITMENT AND FULL SUPPORT IN THE FIGHT AGAINST
HIV/AIDS. THANK YOU. ETER.